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CLAIMS

1. A method for controlling an intelligent device through an Instant Messaging (IM) protocol over a communication network, the method
5 comprising the steps of:
 - coupling the intelligent device having a first IM client to a control station having a second IM client using the communication network;
 - adding the intelligent device to an IM "buddy" list in the control station; and
 - 10 controlling the intelligent device from the control station by sending the intelligent device an instant message from the control station, the instant message comprising a command.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of identifying a
15 status of the intelligent device to the control station by sending from the intelligent device to the control station a selected IM "presence" indication.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
 - creating an IM user list and an access control list corresponding to
 - 20 the intelligent device and to a user; and
 - providing control of the intelligent device by the user in accordance with the access control list.

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4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of authenticating at least one of a user, a server, and a proxy when sending and receiving an instant message.

5 5. An intelligent device arranged for control through an Instant Messaging (IM) protocol over a communication network by a control station having a first IM client installed therein and having the intelligent device in an IM “buddy” list of the control station, the intelligent device comprising:

a communication port for coupling the intelligent device to the communication network; and

a processor coupled to the communication port for controlling the intelligent device,

wherein the processor is programmed with a second IM client arranged to allow the intelligent device to be controlled from the control station through receiving an instant message from the control station, the instant message comprising a command.

6. The intelligent device of claim 5, wherein the processor is further
programmed to identify a status of the intelligent device to the control
station by sending from the intelligent device to the control station a
20 selected IM “presence” indication.

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7. The intelligent device of claim 5, wherein the processor is further programmed to authenticate at least one of a server and a proxy when receiving an instant message.
- 5 8. An intermediate controller for controlling an intelligent device through an Instant Messaging (IM) protocol over a communication network, the intermediate controller comprising:
- a processor; and
- a communication port coupled to the processor for communicating
- 10 with the intelligent device through the communication network, wherein the processor is programmed to:
- create an IM user list and an access control list corresponding to the intelligent device and to a user; and
- provide IM control of the intelligent device by the user in
- 15 accordance with the access control list.
9. The intermediate controller of claim 8, wherein the processor is further programmed to serve as an IM server.
- 20 10. The intermediate controller of claim 8, wherein the processor is further programmed to serve as a wireless network proxy.

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11. The intermediate controller of claim 8, wherein the processor is further programmed to authenticate the user when receiving an instant message for the intelligent device.

5 12. The intermediate controller of claim 8, wherein the processor is further programmed to authenticate the intelligent device when receiving an IM “presence” indication from the intelligent device.

13. A control station for controlling an intelligent device through an Instant
10 Messaging (IM) protocol over a communication network, the intelligent
device having a first IM client installed therein, the control station
comprising:

a communication port for coupling the control station to the communication network;

15 a processor coupled to the communication port for directing
operations of the control station, and

a user interface coupled to the processor for interfacing with a user;

wherein the processor is programmed with a second IM client for
controlling the intelligent device by sending the intelligent device an
instant message comprising a command.

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14. The control station of claim 13, wherein the processor is further programmed to identify a status of the intelligent device by receiving from the intelligent device a selected IM "presence" indication.
- 5 15. The control station of claim 13, wherein the processor is further programmed to authenticate at least one of a server and a proxy when receiving an IM "presence" indication.